

He recognized that his analysis of imperial connections might not infrequently pose hardships when the various legislatures needed to coordinate their actions to deal with mutual concerns. "But we are ready at any time," he added, "to enter into a fair negotiation by which means to concert a plan of cementing the general interest of the empire upon a broad base, at once securing a proper union of counsel and authority, and the individual freedom of each member of the empire, so far as is consistent with the general welfare." He sounded another conciliatory note in saying that the colonists doubtless would continue to adhere to certain just and beneficial parliamentary enactments "without critically inquiring into their constitutionality."

Just how long Iredell's place in the North Carolina patriot party remained a secret is not clear. Up to a point he was discreet, his wife's name does not appear on the list of ladies who attended the misnamed Edenton "Tea Party," in October, 1774, which was actually a distaff group who signed an "Association" approving the resolves of the provincial congress and promising "to do everything as far as lies in our power, to testify our sincere adherence to the same." As Iredell's brother Arthur commented from England, the resolution of the Edenton ladies, which contained the names of all the Johnston women but Hannah Iredell, had drawn considerable attention in the British press. Samuel Johnston himself, according to Governor Martin, had now assumed "absolute guidance" of the Albemarle counties, his politics reflecting the democratic "prejudices of a New England education."³⁴

Though not an elected member, Iredell journeyed to New Bern in April, 1775, to follow the proceedings of the Second Provincial Congress, called by Speaker Harvey to choose delegates to the Second Continental Congress. He instructed Hannah to assure the "Gentlemen" of Edenton that they would not remain "uninformed of any thing that is material." Ostensibly, however, Iredell could claim that official business had brought him to New Bern, the colonial capital, where Josiah Martin's predecessor William Tryon had erected the elegant Governor's Palace. Moreover, the assembly was meeting at New Bern, most of its members also serving in the provincial congress. Iredell confided to his wife that Martin was exceedingly cool to his friends Hooper and Hewes, who had just returned from the First Continental Congress, and that her brother Samuel Johnston "had not even the offer of his hand."³⁵

³⁴ Josiah Martin to Lord Dartmouth, September 1, 1774, Saunders, *Colonial Records*, IX, 1053.

³⁵ JI to Hannah Iredell, March 31, April 4, 1775, below; *North-Carolina Gazette* (New Bern), February 24, 1775.